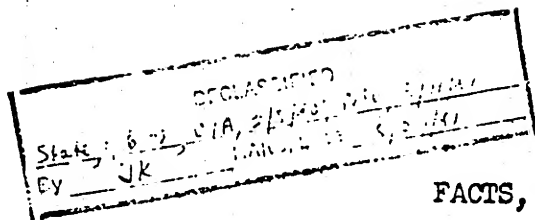


WLC-78-7

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2 May 1961

FACTS, ESTIMATES, AND PROJECTIONS

(Draft prepared 1 May 1961 by combined INR-ONE working group)

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SUMMARY

I. THE PRESENT SITUATION IN CUBA

A. The Armed Forces

The armed forces of the Castro regime number some 250,000, of whom some 200,000 are militia. The regular forces -- army, navy, air, and national police -- have been shaken by purges of officers and men who previously supported Castro against Batista but later became disillusioned by events in Cuba. Castro distrusts the armed forces and has built up the militia, thereby reducing his dependence on the military.

Bloc arms deliveries and intensive training have increased the military capabilities of the army, but its tactical training is still deficient. The militia is composed of people who generally serve only part-time, subject to call in an emergency, but some full-time militia units are now being formed and trained. The latter are, in effect, units of a second, more politically-reliable army. The air force and navy suffer from a lack of professionally trained and technically qualified personnel.

B. Control Mechanisms

In little over two years the Castro regime has established a complex of interlocking mechanisms enabling it to control virtually every phase of life in Cuba. This has been accomplished by imposing leadership loyal to the regime on every local and national organization of any importance, by regimenting the economy, by creating an elaborate internal security apparatus, and by seizing all major newspapers and radio and TV stations.

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BY MLM NARS, DATE 6/10/81



C. Attitudes of Key Individuals

Every key national figure in Cuban society, with the notable exception of the Catholic hierarchy, is by now either a dedicated supporter of communism and the Castro regime or a non-Communist so deeply committed to the regime as to be unlikely to turn against it.

D. Class and Regional Attitudes

The upper class has been destroyed as an effective political or economic force in Cuba. The middle class, which has suffered most from deteriorating economic conditions and the increasingly tight controls imposed by the government, provides the principal organized opposition to the Castro regime.

Attitudes of the lower class toward the regime are dependent upon the degree to which Castro has fulfilled his promises, the degree of hope remaining for the future realization of as yet unfulfilled promises, and the extent of psychological identification with the Revolution. It is that part of the newly self-conscious lower class which has already received positive benefits from the Revolution, or still hopes for future improvement in conditions, that now provides the real mass support for the Castro regime. This group of perhaps 25 percent to 30 percent of the total population probably constitutes the poorest segment of the large Cuban lower class.

By no means all of the Cuban lower class can be considered to favor the Castro regime. The failure of the government to carry out many of its earlier promises has led to increasing disappointment and dissatisfaction. This does not mean, however, that there has been an equal increase in willingness to act against the regime.

E. Economy

The Cuban economy continues to deteriorate both in terms of physical output and in living levels. Output in the industrial sector has been adversely affected by parts and raw material shortages, although sugar production may match or exceed last year's

[REDACTED]

level and the regime is making strenuous efforts to expand agricultural production. Cuba's trade has been redirected largely to the Soviet Bloc, whose economic support is vital for the Castro regime.

II. PROBABLE TRENDS WITHIN CUBA, ASSUMING NO MAJOR US INTERVENTION

A. Political Prospects

Six Months. The position of the Castro regime has been strengthened by the recent invasion victory. It is probable that there will be no major change in internal political conditions during the next six months. Anti-Castro activity within Cuba will be muted as a result of the defeat of the invasion force. Castro may take advantage of his recent victory to organize a full-scale campaign against anti-Castro forces, or he may use the coming period of relative calm as a means of establishing a reputation for forbearance in the face of armed provocation. Indications are that he will probably follow the latter course. He will, in the immediate future, take advantage of his increased strength within Cuba to seize the Church's educational system, and banish two-thirds of the clergy (the non-Cuban proportion).

One Year. The psychological impact of the recent Castro victory will have worn off and living conditions will not have improved perceptibly. Organized anti-Castro opposition will probably have stepped up its sabotage activities, but morale may be weakened) by the apparent hopelessness of the battle against the regime.

Castro will have strengthened his position within the military and extended his control over the Cuban people. Police state methods will have become more effective. The Cuban Communist Party (PSP) will play a more open role in the government, but will not attempt to attain the open exercise of total power.

Five Years. All effective opposition to the regime will probably have been eliminated. Popular attitudes will also have changed. As economic conditions improve, the population will more easily reconcile itself to repugnant political controls. In addition,

an extended period in which to indoctrinate the populace will almost certainly result in a significant increase in emotional and psychological identification with the regime.

Governmental controls will have become pervasive and effective. Increased efficiency of control agencies plus an extension of these controls into all aspects of Cuban life will make dissidence almost totally ineffective irrespective of any possible rise in popular antipathy for the regime beyond that foreseen.

B. Probable Trends in the Armed Forces

With continuing material and technical assistance from the Bloc and with further military training and political indoctrination, under Bloc tutelage, the combat effectiveness of the Cuban armed forces will substantially increase. The Bloc will probably provide some MIG-17's when Cuban pilots training in Czechoslovakia return home. However, the buildup of a sizable jet air force in Cuba will probably be a slow process as compared with the improvement of the army. Nonnuclear air defense missiles may be supplied to Cuba, but the Bloc will not supply offensive type missiles nor nuclear weapons. The solution of the navy's immediate problem depends on the pace at which politically reliable personnel can be technically trained with Bloc assistance. That will take time, and it appears that nothing much is being done about it now.

C. Economic Prospects

Six Months. The economy will deteriorate further, although not sufficiently to jeopardize the regime's stability. The end of the sugar season will mean a general decline in economic activity. Problems in selling sugar in the world market, other than the Bloc, may cause further foreign exchange problems, although the Bloc will move to supply essential requirements.

One Year. Another sugar season and anticipated expansion of industrial plants with Bloc assistance will bolster the economy, although Cuba will still be heavily dependent upon its foreign sugar sales, as yet unpredictable.

[REDACTED]

Some of the major supply and technical problems will have been overcome, and aggregate production may be on the upswing. Consumer austerity will still be in force, although consumption levels of the lower classes especially the rural population may increase slightly.

Five Years. Cuba's natural resources and Bloc economic assistance form the basis to permit Cuba to accomplish much of its five-year plan. This would mean greater economic independence, through increased self-sufficiency, less dependence on sugar, near-full employment, and gradual economic growth.

III. CUBAN VULNERABILITIES

A. Economic

Economic vulnerabilities of the Castro regime include its foreign exchange position, spare parts and raw materials shortages, lack of sufficient technical and managerial personnel, declining per capita income, and consumer shortages and the growing black market. Imposition of the Trading with the Enemy Act against Cuba (which would inter alia reduce Cuba's foreign exchange earnings from the US and would extend the US export embargo to all products)

→ [REDACTED], would aggravate these problems, though not sufficiently, by themselves, to jeopardize the regime's stability. The Bloc would act to assist Cuba by providing minimum essentials and possibly supplying some foreign exchange. [REDACTED] a complete blockade would cause serious economic breakdowns, especially in the urban and industrial sectors. [REDACTED]

→ The possibilities of a direct Soviet-US confrontation in the event of a blockade, and the impact of such action on our international position, are not considered in this paper.

B. Political

[REDACTED]

Popular resentment against the totalitarian controls imposed by the regime has steadily increased.

The hold of the regime depends in large part on control of mass communications media.

IV. RELATIONS OF CASTRO WITH LATIN AMERICA

A. Nature and Extent of the Threat Posed by Castro

The threat posed by the Castro regime in Latin America stems from its inherent appeal to the forces of social unrest and anti-Americanism at a time when most of the area is in the throes of a fundamental transformation. Castro and the Communists have made assiduous efforts to capitalize on this situation. Cuba has become the center of a propaganda and subversion campaign of unprecedented proportions in Latin America. Both Castro and the Communists see the Cuban revolution not as an end in itself but as the prototype of a transformation which will eventually sweep over all of Latin America. Given the chaotic stage of Latin American politics pro-Castro elements have a significant capability for stirring up demonstrations and disorders in a number of countries, and in a few an outside chance of gaining power in the next few years.

B. Present Attitudes Toward Castro

In the aftermath of the recent invasion of Cuba, Latin American attitudes toward Castroism have become more fluid. Ruling groups are temporarily more fearful of the Soviet thrust in the hemisphere and less fearful of popular reaction in support of Castro.

The OAS is now less hostile to US intervention in Cuba than before the invasion, but a majority of its members is still not prepared to intervene in Cuba.

[REDACTED]

C. Probable Developments in the Absence of US Intervention

The danger is not so much that subversive apparatus centered in Havana will be able to export the revolution directly as that increasing misery and discontent among the mass of the Latin American people will provide opportunities for pro-Castro elements to act. The Cuban-Communist political warfare apparatus can obviously do much to further the process, however.

In the absence of direct Cuban intervention in the internal affairs of neighboring states, the present fears of Castroism among Latin American ruling groups will wane and the traditional nonintervention policies will be reasserted.

The Soviet Union is expected to counsel Castro to avoid overt actions which would provoke US counteraction or which could be interpreted by other Latin American governments as Cuban intervention in their domestic affairs.

D. Effect on the US Position

The continued existence of the Castro regime would fundamentally alter the terms of Latin American relations with the US. US restraint would be interpreted by Latin American ruling groups as evidence of weakness.

The US would have to be prepared to underwrite huge welfare and economic development programs and to involve itself directly in their success, always under some threat of withdrawal of cooperation by the Latin American governments.

[REDACTED]

The expulsion of Cuba's Soviet-controlled regime would deprive the USSR of its bridgehead in the western hemisphere and would remove the model for action by extremist groups. However, the Soviets would still have a multitude of weaknesses to exploit, and would have achieved real gains over their early 1959 position.




THE REPORT

I. THE PRESENT SITUATION IN CUBA

A. The Armed Forces

1. General. The armed forces of the Castro regime number some 250,000, of whom some 200,000 are part-time militia. The regular forces -- army, navy, air, and national police -- have been shaken by successive defections and purges of officers and men who supported Castro's revolution against the Batista regime but were disillusioned by the subsequent trend of events in Cuba. The present commanders of these forces are selected for their dedication to the regime rather than for their professional competence; presumably they are reliable. Nevertheless, Castro distrusts the regular forces and has built up the militia at their expense, as a means of organizing armed popular support for the regime and thereby reducing his dependence on the military.



[REDACTED]

B. Probable Trends in the Armed Forces

General.

53. /With continuing material and technical assistance from the Bloc and with further military training and political indoctrination, under Bloc tutelage, the combat effectiveness of the Cuban armed forces will substantially increase. With the passage of time, any seriously disaffected persons remaining in service are likely to defect individually or to be identified and eliminated. Others will tend to accept the situation and the political indoctrination which justifies it, and to take pride in their service in the most formidable military force ever seen in Cuba, or indeed in Latin America.

54. The army is already well provided with Bloc arms and equipment, and partially trained in their use. Further training under Bloc guidance, to include tactical and combined arms training, will greatly enhance its combat effectiveness. The same considerations would apply to the full-time militia units, which are, in effect, politically elite army units.

55. The Militia. By definition, the bulk of the militia must remain part-time soldiers, stronger in numbers and political motivation than in military skill. Continued military training and

political indoctrination, however, will necessarily increase their effectiveness within their limited role.

56. The air force at present, lacks both trained personnel and modern aircraft. To date, the Bloc has supplied only a dozen short-haul utility transports and some 30 helicopters; there are almost certainly no MIG's operational in Cuba. About 100 air force personnel are in training in Czechoslovakia, but they were selected for political reliability, without much prior technical training -- the completion of their training will therefore take some time. Most of them will probably not be ready to return to Cuba until the end of this year, although some may return sooner. Whenever they do return, the Bloc will probably supply some MIG-17's for their use. However, the buildup of a sizable jet air force in Cuba will probably be a slow process as compared with the improvement of the army.

57. The navy lacks, not ships, but technically qualified personnel to run and maintain those which it now has. Eventually the Bloc may supply more modern ships to replace those now available, but the solution of the immediate problem depends on the pace at which politically reliable personnel can be technically trained with Bloc assistance. That will take time, and it appears that nothing much is being done about it now.

[REDACTED]

58. Missiles and Nuclear Weapons -- Although the Bloc may eventually supply Cuba with nonnuclear air defense missiles, it is highly unlikely that it would supply offensive type missiles in view of the provocation this would offer to the US and other Latin American states. It is virtually certain that the Bloc would not supply nuclear weapons to Cuba, even for air defense. It is also highly unlikely that the USSR would seek to station Bloc forces in Cuba.

C. Economic Prospects

59. Six Months -- The next six months will probably see some deterioration in the viability of the economy and in living levels, but not enough, by itself, to endanger the stability of the Castro regime. The sugar harvesting and grinding season ends by mid-year, at which time nearly all levels of economic activity, especially employment, decline. The level of investment in economic development projects is apt to be low, with very few of the new industrial plants to be provided by the Bloc scheduled for 1961 delivery. Although the Cubans may receive from the Bloc an increasing percentage of raw material requirements which have been in short supply over the past six months, it is doubtful that they will make much progress in